

REMARKS

Claims 1-14, 26-33 and 35-38 are pending in the application. Claims 1 and 26 are independent. Claims 1-6, 8-12, 14, 26-28, 30-33, 35, 36 and 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatenable over U.S. Patent No. 5,790,939 to Malcolm et al. (hereinafter, merely "Malcolm") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,714,486 to Biggs (hereinafter, merely "Biggs"). Claims 7 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatenable over Malcolm in view of Biggs and further in view of U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0184154 to Hori et al. (hereinafter, merely "Hori"). Claims 13 and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatenable over Malcolm in view of Biggs and further in view of U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0150236 to Oshima (hereinafter, merely "Oshima").

Applicant submits herewith certified copies of Japanese Patent Application No. 200-333120, filed on October 31, 2000 and Japanese Patent Application No. 2001-245694, filed on August 13, 2001, which the present application claims foreign priority to. Applicant submits that the pending claims are supported by Japanese Patent Application No. 200-333120, filed on October 31, 2000. Thus, Biggs, Hori and Oshima are not prior art since each has a filing date after October 31, 2000. Therefore, Applicant submits that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance and requests withdrawal of the rejections.

The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any insufficient fees or credit any overpayment associated with the above-identified application to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,

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By:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Thomas F. Presson", written over a horizontal line.

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